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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2689
INFO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1712
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS KUALA LUMPUR 000347

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/OCS/EAP
STATE FOR M/PRI FOR RMORRITZ
STATE FOR S/ES-O/CMS FOR EPARRA
STATE FOR EAP/MTS FOR DBISCHOF
STATE FOR OES/AIAG FOR AMBASSADOR LOFTIS, DWINN AND
CPATTERSON
STATE FOR REO/BKK FOR HHOWARD
STATE FOR OES/IHB, AAIT, MED
HHS FOR OGHA STEIGER AND HICKEY
CDC ATLANTA FOR CCID AND COGH
USDA FOR APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KFLU](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [KFLO](#) [TBIO](#) [KSAF](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#)
PINR, AMGT, TF
SUBJECT: PORK SAFETY CONCERNS

REF: A. 2009 State 44254
[1](#)B. 2009 Kuala Lumpur 336

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Malaysia issued a "freeze" on pork imports on April 29 under the auspices of preventing the spread of H1N1. Post officially protested this action on multiple occasions arguing that WHO, FAO, and OIE have all stated that, "Pork and pork products, handled in accordance with good hygienic practices... will not be a source of infection." However, recent statements made by WHO staff have raised questions about pork safety issues in the context of H1N1. Post seeks additional clarification from Washington and requests approved language to be used in communicating with the Ministry of Agriculture and other relevant Malaysian contacts. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) FAS Attache and Econcouns delivered a demarche on instruction from Washington (reftel A.) to the Department of Veterinary Services, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industries, and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry on May 5 requesting a reconsideration of the current Malaysian "freeze" on pork imports from the U.S. Basis for post's demarche was information from the WHO, FAO, and OIE, which stated on April 30 that, "Pork and pork products, handled in accordance with good hygienic practices... will not be a source of infection."

[1](#)3. (U) However, a Reuters article on May 6 quoted a WHO official saying that it was possible for flu viruses to survive the freezing process and be present in thawed meat, as well as in blood, and that "meat from pigs infected with the new H1N1 virus shouldn't be used for human consumption." In the same article, Alex Thiermann, senior adviser to the OIE's director-general claimed there was no difference between raw and cooked meat in terms of H1N1 transmission risks. He said, "The OIE is very concerned that differences are being made between cooked and not cooked meat. All pork products are safe for consumption." In response to the May 6 Reuters article, WHO, FAO, and OIE issued a joint statement on May 7 reconfirming their earlier position on pork and H1N1.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Post will continue its efforts to remove unnecessary barriers to trade on pork. We are scheduled for further discussions

on this subject with the Ministry of Agriculture this week. However, given the mixed messages regarding pork safety and the H1N1 virus this past week, which have caused some confusion locally, post requests updated guidance from Washington clarifying this issue and which will be responsive to the questions we anticipate from the Malaysian side. These likely questions include:

Are there any infected swine herds in the United States? What is being done to inspect herds and what would the United States do if it found an infected herd? Would pork exports be halted under that scenario? Is the United States allowing imports of swine from Canada and Mexico?

Is it safe to eat meat from H1N1 infected pigs if the meat is properly cooked?

Is it possible to get H1N1 from eating pork or pork products that are not properly cooked? If not, why?

Is it possible to get H1N1 from handling pork or pork products that are raw or chilled and uncooked?

Does a ban on US pork exports violate the WTO and in what way?

15. (U) Post appreciates Washington's assistance with this request.

KEITH